



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Yosemite National Park
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, California 95389

IN REPLY REFER TO:
A3823(YOSE)

JUN 27 2003

Dear Yosemite Friends:

On behalf of the National Park Service, I am pleased to present the *East Yosemite Valley Utilities Improvement Plan Environmental Assessment*. In the *Yosemite Valley Plan*, the National Park Service proposes over 250 actions required to restore, protect, and enhance the resources of Yosemite Valley and provide opportunities for high-quality, resource-based visitor experiences. During development of the *Yosemite Valley Plan*, the need to realign and consolidate utility infrastructure in the east Valley was recognized. Existing utilities were constructed throughout the east Valley without a comprehensive look at how to best locate utility infrastructure to provide efficient utility service while minimizing environmental impacts. The *East Yosemite Valley Utilities Improvement Plan* provides a blueprint for the relocation of major utility infrastructure and the reduction of utility infrastructure within environmentally sensitive areas.

Public and agency participation has been a key element throughout this planning process. In late winter 2003, Yosemite National Park held public scoping to solicit ideas and concerns from park visitors, staff, American Indian groups, scientists, park partner organizations, and government agencies. The planning team reviewed public comments and identified a range of issues and concerns. This information was used to develop the alternatives and analysis in this *East Yosemite Valley Utilities Improvement Plan Environmental Assessment*. The project was originally called the *Yosemite Valley Integrated Utility Master Plan* during the public scoping process; the name was changed to more clearly represent what is included in this project, which looks at major utility improvements in the East Valley, from the Yosemite Creek Lift Station to the park water storage tank near Happy Isles.

There will be a 30-day comment period on the environmental assessment. If the environmental assessment and a Finding of No Significant Impact are approved, construction of the proposed consolidated utility corridors will begin this fall to allow for construction of a Merced River utility crossing during the period of low water flows. Implementation of the *East Yosemite Valley Utilities Improvement Plan*, including construction of this new river crossing, will result in the ability to substantially reduce the existing number of utility crossings of the river in the east Valley.

We appreciate your interest in this planning effort and welcome your participation. Comments must be submitted in writing by August 18, 2003, and may be sent to:

Mail: Superintendent, Yosemite National Park
ATTN: East Valley Utilities Improvement Plan
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, California 95389

Fax: 209/379-1294
Email: Yose_Planning@nps.gov

Written comments will also be accepted at the National Park Service planning open house to be held on July 30, 2003 (2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.) at the Yosemite Valley Visitor Center East Auditorium. Planning teams will be on hand to answer questions and provide more information regarding the *East Yosemite Valley Utilities Improvement Plan*, as well as several other Yosemite National Park planning efforts.

The *East Yosemite Valley Utilities Improvement Plan Environmental Assessment* can be reviewed online at www.nps.gov/yose/planning. To request a printed copy, refer to the information directly above or phone 209/379-1365.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Tollefson
Superintendent